

July 22, 1999

## **VA Funding in Senate Budget Resolution Higher than in Clinton Plan** **Of Rubber and Glue:** **Democrats' Inaccurate Charge on Veterans Funding**

A children's rhyme, "I'm rubber, you're glue, what you say bounces off me and sticks to you," might aptly come to mind for those reviewing yesterday's *Congressional Record*: on the issue of veterans funding, Democrats have gotten stuck. They charged that the budget resolution for FY 2000 will result in cuts for the VA program:

*"If the Republican budget passes, and the tax cuts which they have proposed are enacted, here are the cuts we will face . . . Veterans, VA medical care: If the Republican plan passes, forcing the budget cuts which inevitably follow, they will cut treatment for 1.4 million patients, veterans who come to hospitals asking for the care they were promised when they served our country."*

[Senator Durbin, D-IL, *Congressional Record*, 7/21/99]

Yet, recall the facts:

- President Clinton's FY 2000 budget would spend \$2.5 billion *less* from 2000-2004 and \$4.6 billion *less* over 2000-2009 on veterans than would Congress' budget resolution.
- Congress' budget resolution increases spending on veterans' benefits for FY 2000 by \$900 million in budget authority (BA) and by \$1.4 billion in outlays (OL) over 1999.
- Congress' budget resolution increases spending on veterans' benefits for FY 2000 by \$900 million in budget authority (BA) and by \$1.1 billion in outlays (OL) over President Clinton's request.

Better to let the children play games, and Congress stick to reality: Congress' budget resolution increases next year's spending on veterans and increases spending above the Clinton request. In addition to increasing veterans funding, Congress' budget — unlike the President's — adheres to the discretionary spending limits agreed to with the President and then increases spending following the expiration of discretionary spending caps after FY 2002.

Rubber versus glue, rhetoric versus reality, increases versus cuts — thoughts to bear in mind when reviewing Congress' budget resolution versus President Clinton's budget.

Staff Contact: Dr. J.T. Young, 224-2946